

in itself, which we accomplished in forty-eight hours, the two rests included. Of this distance 68 miles lie in the Kevir. A laden caravan does not march quickly and does not make long day's journeys, and goes still slower when the ground is such as it is in the Kevir after rain. We had certainly been lucky in our journey; at the beginning the wet clay was drying, and only on the last few miles it became sappy again. Had this second rain come twelve hours earlier we should have been in a dangerous situation.

But our desert expedition was not yet ended. Our caravan was on the way to Khur; we ourselves were to proceed to Turut to undertake a second crossing, and I should thus have an opportunity of determining the breadth of the desert along another line. I had already found that the road from Jandak to Sadfe crossed the Kevir at the narrowest place in a part where the desert is contracted like an hour-glass. On the road from Kuh-i-nakshir to Jandak I had seen that the western basin of the Kevir expands considerably. I had now to combine my own observations with others to ascertain the conditions of the eastern basin.

We had always one danger to fear; a fresh downpour of rain might cut us off for a time from the caravan at Khur. And to rejoin our men we must expose ourselves to the risks of another desert journey.